

Institute for Advancing Unity



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September 28, 2011

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On behalf of the Capital Unity Council, I would like to thank the Board for your generous support of the Capital Unity Center, a cultural and education facility being designed to engage youth and adult visitors with exhibits and programs that embrace inclusion, honor California's diversity, and motivate people to play an active role in building unity in their communities.

Many of you may remember the impetus for the Center and understand why it is a vital California institution. The genesis was collective action against hate-motivated violence—the 1999 firebombing of three synagogues, the murder of a gay couple, and the burning of a women's health center. As a friend and colleague of many of those hurt by the attacks, I was moved to action, along with such leaders as Joe Serna, Darrell Steinberg, and Robert and Doris Matsui, and thousands of other citizens who gathered in rallies in downtown Sacramento to show solidarity.

From this catalyst emerged the Capital Unity Council and the widely-supported initiative to establish an institution that would not only teach youth about California's diversity but also about nonviolent tools that Californians have used to create change throughout the State's history. The institution would not only be a model for California, but for the country.

California State Librarian Emeritus, Kevin Starr, captured the essence of the Center best when he wrote, "California's future and its promise are nothing less than the future and promise of America. It has a California context, to be sure, but it is nothing separate from the dreams and hopes and aspirations of all the American people in their collective struggle to create a decent, fair, and secure republic."

The Round I CCHE provided seminal funds to build an institution that could preserve and promote our knowledge about that collective struggle and reveal unsung heroes that make up the fabric of California society. The grant enabled us to complete 100% Gold-level LEED Construction Design, obtain Division of State Architect approval, and complete the first set *California Revealed Exhibits*.

We have continued to design and build the components of the *California Revealed Exhibits*. In fact, this round of development has been most the compelling, as our team has recreated experiences near to the heart of CCHE's

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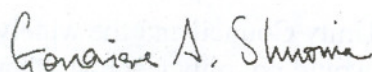
mission of promoting and preserving California's history and culture. The stories provide new perspectives on the impact of such social change makers as Japanese internment protester Fred T. Korematsu, African-American newspaper publisher and Civil Rights advocate Charlotta Bass, and Native American spiritual leader Florence Jones, among many others.

Like many nonprofits and CCHE grantees, we have faced challenges along the way that have delayed our intended construction timelines. In spite of these challenges, we have not abandoned the project or the vision. We request the CCHE Board consider a proposal to install the California Revealed Exhibits in a 10,000 square foot facility under a minimum 15-year, long-term lease. In addition, we ask the CCHE Board to delay action on Agenda item #7 until the mid-October board meeting so you can consider our proposal.

My fellow board members and staff are fully prepared to meet with CCHE to provide more details about the proposal.

Again, we appreciate your support, and look forward to promoting California's history and culture together.

Sincerely,



Genevieve Shiroma

President, Board of Directors, Institute for Advancing Unity

cc: Mimi Morris, Executive Officer
Robert M. Harris, Ph.D., CEO